

**Kathmandu --** The Tilganga Eye Center, Government of Nepal, U.S. Government and other donors celebrated the opening of Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology, an expanded wing of the Tilganga Eye Center in Kathmandu. This expansion has increased the hospital's space by one hundred thirty thousand square feet and will help the hospital meet increased demands for eye care service.

The inaugural event on April 30, which highlighted the hospital's increased capability to respond to patient demands, was attended by the Prime Minister, Pushpa K. Dahal, the U.S. Ambassador to Nepal, Nancy J. Powell, the Australian Ambassador to Nepal, Susan Grace, and other dignitaries.

The U.S. Ambassador to Nepal, Nancy J. Powell remarked, "The Tilganga Eye Center is playing an important role in the diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases and is also recognized worldwide for its work as a highly advanced research and training institute. We also admire the Center's extensive reach across Nepal, including 10 community eye centers in remote districts. Tilganga's community services in extremely hard to reach areas of Nepal provides an exemplary health service delivery model for audiences worldwide."

The United States, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), provided 3.2 million dollars since 2003 to support a significant portion of Tilganga Eye Center's expansion and purchase hospital furnishing and equipment.

"I am confident that the hospital, under the adept guidance of Dr. Ruit, will make excellent use of the state-of-art technology and facilities available at the new and improved Tilganga Eye Center, for the benefit of all Nepalis," Ambassador Powell added.

The Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology was built in partnership with more than fifteen donor nations and individuals, including USAID, Fred Hollows Foundation, Himalayan Cataract Project and Australian Aid.

"These donors provided important financial contributions, as well as a great deal of personal attention and commitment to the Eye Center. The wonderful state-of-the-art facility will always

signify friendship, peace and harmony through restoration of sight. It also marks Nepal's entry into the 21st century through service technology. We believe that our services and training programs will cross geographical and political boundaries," said Dr. Sanduk Ruit, Medical Director of Tilganga Eye Center.